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The Great Pyrenees by Mrs. George Thomas Jones.

LA BELLE ASSEMBLEE,

FOR JANUARY, 1830.

ILLUSTRATIVE MEMOIR OF HER ROYAL HIGHNESS FREDERICA SOPHIA CHARLOTTE, DUCHESS OF CUMBERLAND.

WE cannot but feel proud and honoured in the opportunity of commencing the eleventh volume of *LA BELLE ASSEMBLEE* with a portrait of Her Royal Highness, Frederica Sophia Charlotte, Duchess of Cumberland. This illustrious lady, youngest daughter of His Serene Highness, Frederick the Fifth, late Grand Duke of Mecklenburgh Strelitz, was born on the 20th of March, 1778; and, successively, she was the wife and widow of Prince Louis, of Prussia, and of Frederick William, Prince of Solms Braunfels.

The history of the very ancient ducal and princely house of Mecklenburgh Strelitz, from which the Duchess of Cumberland is a descendant, as was Her late Majesty, Queen Charlotte, is full of interest; yet, as genealogical pursuits are deemed "caviare" to the general reader, it is presumed that a few concise notices, indicating the origin and progress of the family, will be found more acceptable than a minutely-detailed narrative. The Duchy of Mecklenburgh, now comprising a superficial area of about 5,430 square miles, with a population of 370,000, and divided between the two branches of the House of Mecklenburgh, Strelitz and Schwerin, was anciently under the same jurisdiction with the counties, or princi-

palities of Schwerin, Rostock, and Stargard. "Its first inhabitants were the Heruli, Venedi, and others, known under the general appellation of Vandals; a free and brave people, who were never subdued by the Romans, and so renowned for their warlike achievements, that the Emperor Charles the Great, though he had almost a continual war against the Saxons, yet he never chose to provoke the Heruli." That there may be something of fable in the succeeding statement is probable; yet, if so, this is one of the fables which may be said to bear internal evidence of their having had truth for their origin. "Antyrius, who was brought up under the care of an Amazon, near the lakes Mæotides, in Scythia, having practised the art of war under Alexander the Great, put himself at the head of the Heruli, and assumed the title of King. Quitting the possessions in Scythia, which descended to him from his ancestors, and having under his command a body of warlike people, embarked with them on board his fleet, the principal vessel of which having depicted on her stern the head of an ox, it has ever since been retained as the arms of the duchy; but the horns, which were borne white until the time of the Emperor Charles the Fourth, were by

him ordered to be depicted gold, and at the same time, a coronet of gold to be added, in token of their descent from so ancient a race of kings. Antyrius and his companions, arriving at the river Oder, possessed themselves of an extensive tract of country, where they built several towns, which they fortified with strong castles, about the year of the world 3,684, or 320 years before the birth of Christ." This territory appears to have flourished more than a thousand years. In 613, "Vesilaus III. became King of the Vandals on the Baltic, but was afterwards styled King of the Venedi, and dying in A.D. 652, the kingdom of Wenden, or the Venedi, was successively enjoyed by fifteen monarchs, in a regular descent, the last of whom, Pribislaus II. succeeded to the throne in 1159, when the country was in the utmost confusion; Henry the Lion, Duke of Brunswick, having subdued great part thereof; and at the same time its coasts were insulted by the fleet of Waldemar, King of Denmark, after defeating the naval power of Pribislaus, who was obliged to sue for peace, and obtained it; but upon terms dishonourable to himself, and prejudicial to the interests of his subjects." The conqueror was not yet satisfied; and, in the sequel, the kingdom of the Venedi was destroyed.

However, notwithstanding the subversion of his throne, and the extermination of his people, the King Pribislaus was saved; and his illustrious race still reigns over the country which was once inhabited by the Venedi. By one of those extraordinary turns of fortune, more romantic even than romance, Pribislaus was "restored to his dominions by the conqueror himself, who, to cancel the memory of past grievances, endeavoured, by a profusion of kind actions, to repair the injuries he had committed, and to make that Prince his friend whom he was afraid of having injured beyond all hopes of forgiveness. But Pribislaus displayed his magnanimity by the sincerity of his reconciliation; and in consequence of so happy an event, Vandalia rose more beautiful than ever. A marriage soon after took place between Henry, the son of Pribislaus, and Michtild, the daughter of Henry the Lion, which was the commencement of the alliance and friendship which has ever

since subsisted between the houses of Brunswick* and Mecklenburgh." * * * "Pribislaus received from Henry the Lion, all the country between the Elbe and the Baltic, except Schwerin: he was afterwards baptised at Lunenburg, by the Abbot of St. Michael, and his zeal for Christianity appeared upon many occasions. Among other acts of his pious bounty, the monastery of Dobran stands a lasting monument of the founder's charity.

* "An English subject," says Gibbon, "may be prompted by a just and liberal curiosity, to investigate the original story of the House of Brunswick, which after an alliance with the daughters of our kings, has been called by the voice of a free people to the legal inheritance of the crown. From George the First, and his father, the first Elector of Hanover, we ascend in a clear and regular series, to the first Duke of Brunswick and Lunenburgh, who received his investiture from Frederick the Second, about the middle of the thirteenth century. If these ample possessions had been the gift of the Emperor to some adventurous soldier, to some faithful client, we might be content with the antiquity and lustre of a noble, which had been enrolled nearly 600 years among the princes of Germany. But our ideas are raised, and our prospect is opened by the discovery that the first Duke of Brunswick was rather degraded than adorned by his new title, since it imposed the duties of feudal service on the free and patrimonial estate, which alone had been saved in the shipwreck of the more splendid fortunes of his houses. His ancestors had been invested with the powerful duchies of Bavaria and Saxony, which extended far beyond their limits in modern geography: from the Baltic Sea to the confines of Rome they were obeyed, or respected, or feared; and in the quarrels of the Guelphs and Gibellines, the former appellation was derived from the name of their progenitors, in the female line. But the genuine masculine descent of the princes of Brunswick must be explored beyond the Alps: the venerable tree which has since overshadowed Germany and Britain was planted in the Italian soil. As far as our sight can reach, we discern the first founders of the race in the Marquises of Este, of Liguria, and perhaps of Tuscany. In the eleventh century, the primitive stem was divided into two branches; the elder migrated to the banks of the Danube and the Elbe; the younger more humbly adhered to the neighbourhood of the Adriatic: the Dukes of Brunswick, and the Kings of Great Britain, are the descendants of the first; the Dukes of Ferrara and Modena were the offspring of the second.

He repaired throughout his dominions, as far as he was able, the devastations of the late war, founded Rostock, and rebuilt Mecklenburgh, which was originally founded by Antyrius."

Pribislaus died at Lunenburg towards the close of the twelfth century, and was interred in the monastery of Dobran (together with his wife, who was a daughter of Poislava, King of Norway) where his epitaph styles him Pribislaus dei gratia Herulorum, Vagriorum, Circipænorum, Polamborum, Obotritarum, Kissinorum Vandalumque Rex. "By his marriage with Michtild, daughter of Henry the Lion, his son and successor, Henry Burevinus I. enriched the veins of his descendants with the blood of Witekind the Great and his Saxon ancestors. By this means, the present house of Mecklenburgh may vie with the House of Brunswick, in their claim to the Saxon lineage, since both are equally, and by the same means, though at different periods, descended from Harderick, king of the Saxons."

Descendants from Burevinus, were Albert I. and John I. who divided their dominions; the former chusing Mecklenburgh, the latter Stargard. These Princes stood so high in favour with the Emperor Charles IV., that they were created Dukes of their respective territories, and Princes of the empire, at the diet of Prague, in 1349.

Adolphus Frederick I., the patriarch of both the present houses of Schwerin and Strelitz, was, with his brother, John Albert II., proscribed in 1628, for assisting Christiern IV., King of Denmark; but they were both restored by the victorious arms of Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, in 1631. His son,

Adolphus Frederick II., who succeeded in Strelitz, married thrice: first, Mary, daughter of Gustavus Adolphus, Duke of Gustrow; secondly, Joanna, daughter of Frederick, Duke of Saxe Gotha; thirdly, Christina Emilia Antonia, daughter of Christian William, Prince of Schwartzburg Sonderhausen.

Charles Lewis Frederick, the only son of Adolphus Frederick, by his third wife, the Princess of Schwartzburg, was born in 1708; and he married, in 1734, Albertina Elizabeth, daughter of Ernest Frederick, Duke of Saxe Hildburghausen;

by whom he had, amongst a family of ten children, Charles Louis Frederick IV., father of the Duchess of Cumberland, who succeeded to Strelitz, on the death of his brother, Adolphus Frederick III. without male issue, in 1794; and Sophia Charlotte, consort of His Majesty, George III. of England; to whom, consequently, the Duchess was niece.

Frederick IV., Duke of Mecklenburgh Strelitz, was born on the 10th of October, 1741. His Serene Highness married, successively, two daughters of George William, Prince of Hesse Darmstadt; by the first of whom—*Frederica Carolina*—he had issue as follows:—1. *Charlotte Georgiana Frederica*, married to *Frederick*, Duke of Saxe Hildburghausen;—2. *Caroline Augusta*, born in 1771;—3. *Theresa Matilda Amelia*, married to *Charles Alexander*, Prince of Tour and Taxis, by whom she had a daughter, *Maria Theresa*, married, in 1812, to the present Prince *Nicolas*, of *Esterhazy Galantha*, in Hungary, one of the richest subjects in Europe;—4. *Louisa Augusta Wilhelmina*, born in 1776;—5. *Frederica Sophia Charlotte*, *Duchess of Cumberland*;—6. *George Frederick Charles Joseph*, born in 1779, now reigning Duke of Mecklenburgh Strelitz.—*Frederick IV.* married, secondly, in 1785, the Princess *Charlotte Wilhelmina*, of *Hesse Darmstadt*, by whom he had one son, *Charles Frederick Augustus*, born in 1785.

The Princess *Frederica Sophia*, now *Duchess of Cumberland*—born, as we have stated, on the 20th of March, 1778—was married, first, to Prince *Louis*, brother of the King of Prussia, by whom she had two children:—1. Prince *Frederick William Louis*, born on the 30th of October, 1794, married, in November, 1817, the Princess *Wilhelmina Louisa*, daughter of *Alexis Frederick Christian*, Duke of *Anhalt Bernbourg*;—2. *Frederica Wilhelmina Louisa Amelia*, married, on the 18th of April, 1818, to the reigning Duke of *Anhalt Dessau*.

The Princess married, secondly, *Frederick William*, Prince of *Solms Braunsfels*, by whom she had a family of four children:—1. *Frederick William Henry Casimir George Charles Maximilian*, born on the 30th of December, 1801, a Lieutenant in the Prussian service, in 1827;—

2. Augusta Louisa Theresa Matilda, born on the 26th of July, 1804;—3. Alexander Frederick Louis, born on the 12th of March, 1807, a Lieutenant in the Prussian service;—4. Frederick William Charles Louis George Alfred Alexander, born on the 27th of July, 1812.

The Prince of Solms died on the 13th of April, 1814; on the 29th of May, 1815, his widow, the Princess, was married, at Strelitz, to His Royal Highness Prince Ernest Augustus, Duke of Cumberland; and, on the 29th of August following, the marriage ceremony was repeated at Carlton House, according to the rites of the church of England. On this occasion, His Royal Highness the Prince Regent handed the Duchess from her carriage, and through the private rooms, and gave the bride away at the altar. The Archbishop of Canterbury performed the ceremony; and the responses were made by the Bishop of London and the Rev. Mr. Blomberg, Clerk of the Closet. The Duchess wore a white satin robe, embroidered with gold, with a train reported to have been five yards in length. Her head-dress was a tiara and ducal coronet, with a profusion of diamonds and other jewels.

It seems hardly necessary to state, that the Duke of Cumberland is, by birth, the fifth, and in survivorship the third son of their late Majesties, George III. and Queen Charlotte. His Royal Highness was born on the 5th of June, 1771. He is Duke of Cumberland and Teviotdale in Great Britain, and Earl of Armagh, in Ireland; Knight of the Garter; Grand Cross of the Bath; Knight of the Most Illustrious Order of St. Patrick; D.C.L., and F.S.A.; Chancellor of the University

of Dublin; Field Marshal in the Army; Colonel of the 15th Regiment of Light Dragoons, and President of the Board of General Officers, and of the Royal Naval Asylum. His Royal Highness served in more than one campaign, during the late war, under Marshal Freytag and General Walmoden; and he has rank, and a regiment, in the Hanoverian service.

By her present marriage, the Duchess of Cumberland had a still-born daughter, on the 27th of January, 1817; and, subsequently, at Berlin, on the 27th of May, 1819, she had a son, George Frederick Alexander Charles Ernest Augustus, at this time an exceedingly fine and promising youth.

It was at the Congress of Vienna, in 1815, the year of the Duchess's marriage, that her father received the title of Grand Duke, and was invested with the right of voting at the diet of the empire. His Serene Highness, who had been long in the Hanoverian service, was justly regarded as the father of his people. He died of apoplexy, on the 6th of November, 1816, and was succeeded by his son by his first marriage, the present Grand Duke, George Frederick Charles Joseph. This Prince was born on the 12th of August (the anniversary of the birth of our present sovereign) 1779, the year after the birth of his sister, the Duchess; and he married, on the 12th of August (the anniversary of his own birth) 1817, Maria Wilhelmina Frederica, daughter of Frederick, Landgrave of Hesse Cassel, by whom he has had four children:—1. Caroline Louisa, born May 31, 1818;—2. Frederick William, born October 17, 1819;—3. Caroline Charlotte, born January 10, 1821;—4. George, born January 11, 1824.